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UNRAVELING THE NEW IDENTITY OF ALFRED SARANT
BY BARTON REPPERT

A Harvard researcher has uncovered evidence indicating that a long-missing associate of Julius Rosenberg, executed 30 years ago for atomic espionage, assumed a new identity in the Soviet Union and played a key role in the development of Soviet military computers.

On Aug. 9, 1950, following Rosenberg's arrest by the FBI, 32-year-old electronics engineer Alfred Sarant fled across the U.S.-Mexican border with a neighbor's wife from Ithaca, N.Y., where Sarant had been working on a synchrotron atom-smasher project at Cornell University.

A few days later, the couple disappeared.

Justice Department officials at the time said it was presumed that Sarant and another Rosenberg associate, Joel Barr, had defected to the Soviet bloc.

But for years, the fates of Sarant and Barr remained a mystery. No specific information reached the West regarding their whereabouts, work or personal lives.

Now, however, interviews with scientists and engineers who recently emigrated to the United States from the Soviet Union indicate that Sarant not only went to the U.S.S.R., but also emerged as a founder of Soviet microelectronics.

According to Mark Kuchment, a science historian at Harvard's Russian Research Center, Sarant headed first to Czechoslovakia and then to Leningrad, where he lived and worked under a new name — Philip Georgiyevich Staros.

"His career really developed in the Soviet Union," Kuchment said, noting that by the early 1960s the American defector had gained the attention of Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev and Dmitri F. Ustinov, currently minister of defense.

In 1969, Staros was named a Soviet state prize laureate. After he died of a heart attack 10 years later, an obituary appearing in the government newspaper Izvestia saluted him as an "indefatigable scientist ... who made a major contribution to the inception and development of microelectronics."

Kuchment, who himself left the Soviet Union in 1975, has been conducting an emigre interview project under a three-year, \$120,000 grant from the Washington-based National Council for Soviet and East European Research.

He said the interviews have indicated that Barr, an electronics engineer who had shared an apartment with Sarant in New York, also went to the Soviet Union and assumed a new identity — as Joseph V. Berg.

"According to the information I have, Joseph Berg is still alive. He works in Leningrad," Kuchment said.

Also reported to be still living in Leningrad is Staros' widow, Anna, who as Carol Dayton — Sarant's next-door neighbor in Ithaca and at that time married to a Cornell physicist — had gone with Sarant to Mexico in 1950.

Joyce Milton, co-author with Ronald Radosh of "The Rosenberg File," a recently published study of the Rosenberg case, said she was impressed by the new evidence emerging about the Soviet lives of Sarant and Barr.

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